

God's Plan to Save Us



SABBATH—OCTOBER 7

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: John 20:21, 22; Matthew 28:16–20; Revelation 14:6, 7; Genesis 12:1–3; Revelation 7:9, 10.

MEMORY VERSE: “So go and make followers of all people in the world [on the earth]. Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19, ERV).

We also can share with other people our experience with God and His saving love.

GOD works to save us. We see this idea all through the Bible. God's work to save us is the same as a thread that connects the stories of our human history together. Also, God's work to save us helps us to understand another part of His saving plan. God wants to make our lives new (read Colossians 3:9, 10; 1 John 3:2).

God's work to save us also helps us understand God's Word, the Bible. When we read the Bible, we understand that God wants to touch our lives. God wants to be close to us in our hearts. Yes, sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:2). But God continues to fix the broken relationship with His children. God will keep doing this work until He makes everything new (Revelation 21:5).

Meanwhile, God chose to show Himself to us in a special way to help us understand His love and His plan to save us. God showed us who He is so that we can have a real relationship with Him. Then we can come to know and love Him. We also can share with other people our experience with God and His saving love. In the Bible, God gives us a picture that shows us what His saving plan is all about.

**THE THREE-IN-ONE-GOD WORKS TO SAVE US
(John 20:21, 22)**

The Bible teaches us that Jesus is the most important part of God’s plan to save us. Jesus announced: “ ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. The only way to the Father is through [because of] me’ ” (John 14:6, ERV). Jesus, the Son, also helps us understand how much the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit work together to save us.

Everything Jesus did was for us and came from His Father in heaven (read John 4:34; John 5:30; John 12:45). Remember, Jesus’ work to save us didn’t start when He came to this earth. God the Father chose Jesus as our Savior before Jesus made the earth (read Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:20). So, God made a plan to save us before He made this planet. After we sinned, God became part of human history to save us. “When the right time came” (Galatians 4:4, ERV), God showed us His love. He gave us His Son (John 3:16, 17). Jesus died on the cross and woke up from the dead. Then the Father sent the Holy Spirit to us (John 14:26; John 16:7). The Spirit shows us that sin is very terrible (John 16:8–11). Today, the Spirit continues God’s saving work on this earth (John 14:26; John 16:13, 14).

Read John 20:21, 22. These verses teach us that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit work together to save us. They give us our work. Our work belongs to Them because it started with Them. What hope does this Bible truth give us as we share Jesus with other people?

The words “Three-in-One-God” aren’t written anywhere in the Bible. But many verses in the Bible teach that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit work together to save us. After Jesus woke up from the dead, He showed Himself to His followers. Jesus promised them: “ ‘Remember that I will send you the one [Holy Spirit] my Father promised’ ” (Luke 24:49, ERV). In this one verse, we see the saving plan of the Three-in-One-God: the Father’s promise, the Son’s announcement to keep the promise, and the Holy Spirit’s coming (compare with Luke 3:16; Acts 1:4, 5, 8).

We learn from this verse that the work of saving humans belongs to the Three-in-One-God. God can’t fail. So, His work to save us won’t fail.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all part of the work to save humans. Why should this thought give you hope?



Everything Jesus did was for us and came from His Father in heaven.

MAKING FOLLOWERS FOR JESUS (Matthew 28:16–20)

Read Matthew 28:16–20. In these verses, we read about Jesus’ final orders to His followers. Jesus talks to His followers about how to make new followers for Him. What does Jesus tell His followers to do?



How do we make new followers for Jesus? Jesus tells us. He wants us to teach, baptize, and share His teachings with everyone on earth.

Part of Jesus’ final orders to His followers includes His Important Command (Matthew 28:18–20). Jesus commands His followers to travel to new places and make new followers for Him. Jesus commands His followers to teach people about their faith and to join with them in Christian fellowship (read also Mark 16:15, 16; Luke 24:44–49; John 20:21–23; Acts 1:8).

There are four basic parts to Jesus’ final orders. (1) Jesus commands His followers to go to Galilee to be with Him (Matthew 28:16, 17). (2) Jesus announces that God gave Him control over everything in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). (3) Jesus commands His followers to do a special task: make new followers for Him (Matthew 28:19, 20). Finally, (4) Jesus promises to be with His followers until the end (Matthew 28:20).

Making new followers for Jesus is the most important part of His orders. This task is the most important part of our work for God, too. After Jesus announces that God gave Him control of everything in heaven and on earth, Jesus tells His followers, “ ‘So go and make disciples in all countries’ ” (Matthew 28:19, ICB). Do you see the word “So”? That word helps us understand that Jesus commands His followers because He controls everything now (Matthew 28:18). He is all-powerful because He died for our sins and woke up from the dead.

How do we make new followers for Jesus? What does this work include? Jesus tells us. He wants us to teach, baptize, and share His teachings with everyone on earth. Jesus wants us to make more followers. This task is our most important work. Matthew 28:16–20 ends with Jesus’ promise to be with His followers always.

The Important Command is for us, too. Every follower of Jesus today must join Him in His work to make new followers for Him. The Good News about Jesus is for everyone on earth, not only Christians.

What are you doing now to make followers for Jesus? What more can you do?

THE GOOD NEWS (Revelation 14:6, 7)

In Revelation 14:6, 7, we read about the 1st Angel’s Message. The angel announces the “Good News that lasts [continues] forever” (Revelation 14:6, NLV). How does this Good News show us God’s work to save us?

Revelation 14:6, 7 are the only verses in the Bible that join the words “lasts [continues]” and “Good News” together. The Good News is good because God gives us a message about God’s mercy to save us from sin. The Good News gets better: God offers this gift of pardon to everyone because of Jesus. Jesus came to this earth to show us God’s “loving-favor and truth” (John 1:14, NLV). Jesus did not sin. He died on the cross for our sins. He was our Substitute. He accepted our punishment (Isaiah 53:4, 5; 1 Peter 3:18). Jesus woke up from the dead. He went to heaven. The Father honored Him. Today, Jesus goes to the Father to get help for us in our fight against sin (Revelation 1:18; Acts 2:33; Hebrews 7:25). Soon, Jesus will keep His biggest promise: He will come back as the King of kings to this earth. Then, after 1,000 years, Jesus will put God’s kingdom on this earth (John 14:1–4; Acts 1:11; Revelation 21:1–4). All of these promises are parts of the Good News.

There will never be another Good News. False teachings come and go (Ephesians 4:14). But the Good News doesn’t change. God will reward the people who believe this message and obey it (read Deuteronomy 5:33; Romans 2:6).

The same command that Jesus gave to His first followers He gives to us today. We must make followers who are ready to see Jesus. Then these new followers will help other people get ready to see Jesus, too.

In Revelation 14:6, 7, the first angel announces “that God will judge the earth. God’s work as Judge helps us understand that the Second Coming is very near. This announcement is part of the everlasting Good News. So, the message about the Second Coming and that it will happen soon are important parts of the Good News.”—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pages 227, 228, adapted.

What is the connection between God’s work as Judge and the Good News that continues forever in the 1st Angel’s Message? Why is the Good News an important part of God’s work as Judge of the whole earth?

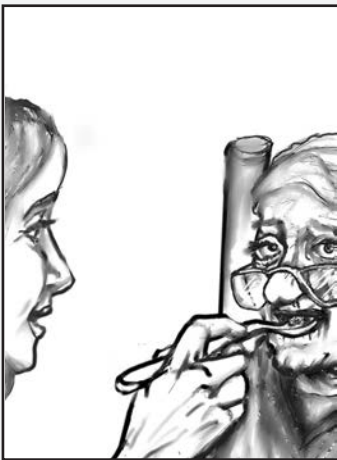


Jesus woke up from the dead. He went to heaven.

GOD'S PEOPLE WORK WITH HIM TO SAVE SINNERS (Genesis 12:1–3)

God always had followers who showed His love to other people. God's people obeyed Him and accepted His plan for their lives. God continues to choose people today. God's chosen people today accept His gift of mercy. All of God's people, in the past and now, help Him save sinners.

What was God's first plan for His people in the Old Testament? Read Genesis 12:1–3 and Deuteronomy 7:6, 11, 12 for the answer.



“The church must show God's love to people and win them to Jesus with love.

God's special agreement with Abraham and his future children was part of God's plan to save sinners. God chose Abraham and his future children, the Israelites, to be His helpers in this important work. God wanted to bless Israel and then bless other people groups because of Israel. So, God chose Israel to be in a special relationship with Him. The relationship between God and Israel was part of God's special agreement. Israel agreed to have faith in God and obey Him (Genesis 22:16–18; Exodus 19:5, 6; Deuteronomy 28:1, 2; and 2 Chronicles 7:14). God also made the Israelites His witnesses. God hoped that other people would want to serve Him, too, when they saw the blessings He gave Israel. This work was all part of God's plan to save humans.

In the New Testament, God's work continues. Jesus adds something new to God's saving plan: the church (read Matthew 28:18–20; Acts 1:8). Jesus' followers go to every place on earth. How is this work different from the work that Israel did in the Old Testament? In Old Testament times, God brought people from different countries to Israel to learn about Him. But in New Testament times, God's followers go everywhere on earth to share the Good News. God's work to save sinners didn't start with the church. God started the church because He has work to do on the earth. God uses His church to do this work.

What is the church's work? The same work that Jesus does. Jesus says, “ ‘The Son of Man came to find lost people and save them’ ” (Luke 19:10, ERV). No one in the church can save anyone. But we can, and must, lead other people to the only One who can save. That Person is Jesus.

“What is the church's work? To save sinners. The church must show God's love to people and win them to Jesus with love.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 3, page 381, adapted.

HOW BIG IS GOD'S PLAN TO SAVE US? (Revelation 7:9, 10)

How big is His plan to save us? Read Revelation 7:9, 10 for the answer.

This week, we studied two important sets of verses: Matthew 28:16–20 and Revelation 14:6, 7. These verses help us understand God's plan to save sinners. These verses also teach us two things: (1) Jesus commands us to make new followers for Him, and (2) the Good News is an important part of God's saving plan. These verses teach us **where** God's plan will happen: "Go and make disciples in all countries" (Matthew 28:19, ICB), and share the Good News with "the people who live on the earth. The good news is for every country, tribe [family group], language, and nation [race group]" (Revelation 14:6, NIV).

So, the Good News about Jesus is for all people everywhere. God plans for the Good News to join all people in fellowship. If we accept Jesus' teachings, He will empty our hearts of hate, dislike, pride, jealousy, and all other bad feelings that separate us from each other. Then God's Spirit will join our hearts together in Christian love.

Jesus commanded His followers and us, " 'You will tell about Me' " (Acts 1:8, NLV). Jesus wants us to be His witnesses. But where? Jesus gives us the answer:

Area 1: "in Jerusalem" (Acts 1:8, ERV). At the time, Jesus' followers were near Jerusalem. So, Jesus wanted them to start by sharing their experience with the people near them. God's work to save other people starts in our homes, with our families, neighbors, and friends.

Area 2: "in the rest of Judea, in Samaria" (Acts 1:8, ERV). We must reach out to the people who speak the same language we do, but who don't share our faith. This group of people includes the people in our own cities or country.

Area 3: "in every part of the world [earth]" (Acts 1:8, ERV). God sends us to share the Good News with people from all places, countries, people groups, and languages.

Task #1: Pray every day this week for your community. God placed you there for a reason.

Task #2: Who are the people who live near you? What is their religion? What languages do they speak? Are they young, old, poor, or rich? Ask God to show you how you may show His love to them.



God sends us to share the Good News with people from all places, countries, people groups, and languages.



The sun's rays shine to the farthest parts of the earth. In the same way, God wants His church to share the Good News about Jesus with every person on the earth.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “Jesus said, ‘You are the light that shines for the world [everyone on earth] to see’ [Matthew 5:14, ERV]. The Savior’s words help us understand that He gave His followers a worldwide job. God wants us to be the same as the sun in our work for Him. The sun’s rays shine to the farthest parts of the earth. In the same way, God wants His church to share the Good News about Jesus with every person on the earth. When the church does this work, then the Good News will shine the same as light on the minds of people who are dead in sin and who believe lies. Church members must pick up their crosses. They must do the work God gave them to do. They must work as Jesus did to save people. Then the Good News will go fast to everyone on the earth. . . .

“God opens areas in countries where we can do His work. Angels work together with God’s people. God joins His strength to our human effort. . . . Some people have answered God’s command to work. Let every holy heart now answer. Let everyone announce the life-giving message. Men and women must empty their hearts of all pride. They must accept with faith the work God gave them to do. Then God will work with these men and women to help many people to accept Bible truth. God will bless their efforts and give them wonderful blessings.”—Ellen G. White, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, November 14, 1912, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Do people in your community trust your church or know about it? Can they depend on you as Christians to show them Jesus and to help them when they are in need? What can you do to build trust for your church in your community?
- ② As Christians, why is the Good News about Jesus the most important part of our message and our work? Can we give hope to anyone, anywhere, without the Good News? Explain your answer.

TWO BOYS, TWO PRAYERS—PART 2

Eight months passed after God gave Father an amazing answer to prayer. Then Seventh-day Adventist church members visited Father a second time on a Sabbath at his home in Conakry, Guinea. Guinea is a country in West Africa. 15 people arrived with Father's sons, Junior and Emile. The boys were students at the Adventist school that was next to the Adventist church.

A church leader said to Father, "We want to pray with you."

Father was thankful, but first he had a question. "All other Christians go to church on Sunday. But you worship on Saturday. Why?"

The church leader invited Father to open his Bible to Exodus 20:8–10. Father read, " 'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor [work] and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God' " (NKJV). But father wasn't convinced. He said, "The 7th day is Sunday." Father said this because the calendar in some countries was changed so that Monday is now the 1st day of the week.

The leader asked Father to turn to Matthew 28:1. Father read, " 'The day after the Sabbath day was the first day of the week. That day at dawn Mary Magdalene and the other woman named Mary went to look at the tomb' " (ERV). Father saw the 7th day of the Bible was Saturday. After the church group left, he showed the Sabbath verses to Mother. "I don't care what the Adventists say. I won't leave my church."

Father said that they should pray and fast. When people fast, they don't eat food for a short time. Father said, "We started having questions about the Sabbath after our boys started to go the Adventist school. We sent our kids there to learn. But maybe God sent our kids to that church to lead us there. If this is Jesus' church, let Jesus show us."

The next Sabbath, Mother agreed to go the Adventist church. The church members welcomed Mother and Father with smiles. Father was so happy. He felt God lift a heavy load off his back. Father hadn't prayed a lot in the past. Now he prayed every day.

As Father prayed, God changed his life. God gave Father success in his job. Father started to get along with family. Soon Father and Mother were baptized. Father says, "I have peace." Father's name is Pepe Vactorien Soropogui (see picture). His wife's name is Tido Grace Haba. Father says, "I know Jesus is with this church. I thank God for bringing me here."

Thank you for your 13th Sabbath Offering three years ago that helped the Adventist Maranatha School in the middle of West Africa. Your 13th Sabbath Offering this quarter will again help workers in the middle of West Africa share the Good News.

INSIDE
Story
by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



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That day at dawn Mary Magdalene and the other woman named Mary went to look at the tomb' " (Matthew 28:1, ERV).

